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LETTER DATED 24 MAY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 24 May 1998 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the confirmation by British officials that British and United States forces used missiles containing depleted uranium during their aggression against Iraq. The Minister also makes clear the disastrous effects that the radiation and toxins released by these missiles have had on health and the environment in Iraq.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 24 May 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the recent further admission on 30 April 1998 by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland that British forces taking part in the aggression unleashed against Iraq in 1991 used missiles containing depleted uranium, in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations and of international agreements and conventions banning the use of excessively injurious or indiscriminate weapons. Mr. A. N. King, from the Middle East Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said in response to a query from a humanitarian relief organization that, on the order of the Ministry of Defence, British tanks used missiles containing depleted uranium during the Gulf War. This new admission confirms previous admissions made by several British and United States official and unofficial sources that the allied forces led by the United States of America committed genocidal crimes for which they are accountable under international law.

Malcolm Rifkind, the former British Minister of Defence, also admitted in a letter dated 6 December 1994 addressed to British M.P. Sir David Steel that British forces had used 88 missiles containing depleted uranium during the aggression against Iraq, and that the United States had used many more. He also stated in the same letter that on impact such missiles discharge a highly toxic material, which constitutes a health threat. Scientific research and studies have found irrefutable evidence that the United States and Britain used depleted uranium in their military operations against Iraq, thereby exposing large tracts of Iraqi land to deadly radioactive contamination. A large number of previously unknown illnesses have been recorded, such as foetal malformations, bone deformities and unexplained conditions such as hair loss and strange diseases of the skin which have affected people in the areas that were bombarded by these missiles. Cases of child leukaemia have also increased.

Iraq raises this issue while reaffirming its legitimate right to fair compensation for the appalling damage caused to the Iraqi people, installations and environment through use of this weapon.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq